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REPORTS TO THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL

Report of the Executive Director

This report has been prepared in a joint format agreed to by UNDP, UNFPA and UNICEF covering the list of common issues identified during consultations among the members of the United Nations Development Group (UNDG). Main issues include: (a) implementation of the reform proposals of the Secretary-General and the provisions of the triennial comprehensive policy review contained in General Assembly resolution 53/192 of 15 December 1998; (b) follow-up to international conferences; and (c) humanitarian and disaster relief assistance.

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. The year 1999 was a special one for UNFPA. The ICPD+5 review process was successfully completed, culminating in July 1999 in the adoption by the General Assembly of the Key actions for the further implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) (A/RES/S-21/2). The review addressed a wide range of issues covered by the triennial policy review, including, among other things, the need to enhance the complementarity and impact of the work of the United Nations development system. Strengths and constraints were identified, and lessons were learned for further strengthening the implementation of the ICPD. The five-year review also provided an opportunity to strengthen the vital partnerships both within and outside the United Nations system that have been instrumental in implementing the ICPD Programme of Action. Indeed, partnerships and collaboration were the subject of a separate section of the document on key actions (section V).

2. Closely following on the ICPD+5 review, cooperation among the partners of the UNDG further thrived in the context of the reviews of other United Nations conferences. UNFPA has considered these reviews as opportunities to reflect on how the United Nations system can, under the leadership of the Secretary-General, assist countries in achieving the goals of the action plans of these conferences in a collaborative manner. With this end in mind, in its own follow-up to the key actions of the ICPD+5, UNFPA convened an ad hoc inter-agency meeting of the Basic Social Services for All (BSSA) Task Force in September 1999. The aim was to consider collaborative mechanisms to operationalize key actions and to reach new benchmarks identified by the ICPD review process, as well as to examine how the Task Force could address joint issues in all the upcoming "Plus Five" conference reviews.

II. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE REFORM PROGRAMME OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL AND THE PROVISIONS OF THE TRIENNIAL COMPREHENSIVE POLICY REVIEW

A. Structures and mechanisms

3. The Secretary-General's proposals for reform mandated by the Member States have provided the context in which the operational activities for development of the United Nations system are being strengthened. This has been further reinforced by the directives from the General Assembly through its resolution 53/192 of 15 December 1998 on the triennial comprehensive policy review.

4. The UNDG has pursued a number of mechanisms, some of which are discussed in detail later in this report, to enhance collaboration and improve coordination of operational activities at the country level. UNFPA has continued to work very closely with the UNDG in all of its activities, and has contributed in every way it can to optimize the impact of the United Nations system's actions at the country level, sometimes quite disproportionate in relation to its small size and limited human resources. As a result, UNFPA is poised to contribute to the impact evaluation of the UNDAF as called for in paragraph 63 of resolution 53/192.

5. In its follow-up to the triennial policy review and to the key actions for the further implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action, the Fund is committed to bringing, within its area of work, a strategic focus to its efforts in addressing the outcomes of all United Nations conferences. This is consistent with paragraphs 5 and 6 of resolution 53/192 and with paragraph 89 of the document on key actions, which states that all relevant bodies and entities of the United Nations system should continue to clarify, within existing mechanisms, their specific leadership roles and responsibilities and continue to strengthen their efforts to promote system-wide coordination and collaboration, especially at the country level. Paragraph 89 further states that the inter-agency coordination role of UNFPA in the field of population and reproductive health should be reinforced. With this in mind, UNFPA organized an inter-agency meeting of the BSSA Task Force at the conclusion of the ICPD+5 review process to identify the roles of all the respective partners in the follow-up to the ICPD review.

6. The membership of the UNDG has expanded from the initial four organizations to include such other organizations as the World Health Organization (WHO). Issues that are of interest to the United Nations system as a whole, such as the Resident Coordinator system, are dealt with by the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC) in which UNFPA plays an active role. After initially undertaking a large number of initiatives and establishing several working groups, the UNDG has rationalized its work to encompass much fewer and more focused mechanisms.

Problems and lessons learned

7. Although efforts are ongoing among the UNDG partners to increase collaboration in the areas addressed in the triennial policy review, such efforts have to be further enhanced to be more consistent with the levels of cooperation and collaboration that are more clearly visible at the country level. Moreover, mechanisms to promote greater involvement of field representatives in the activities at headquarters must be further streamlined, and there must be further exchange and a constant flow of information among all partners on good practices and new developments.

8. In recognition of the fact that field representatives are responsible for implementing mechanisms and procedures developed by the UNDG, greater monitoring and follow-up are required to ensure sustained compliance. Mechanisms that tend to burden organizations, especially small ones such as UNFPA, need to be identified and streamlined. Efforts are already under way to reduce the number of groups working on various issues, as, for example, in the case of the UNDG Subgroup on Training, which has taken the lead on training issues, allowing for the discontinuation of a Consultative Committee on Programme and Operational Questions (CCPOQ) Working Group that had a similar mandate. Other similar efforts at streamlining have been undertaken within UNDG and need to be kept under review.

Recommendations

9. The Council may wish to :

(a) Take note of the progress achieved in the implementation of the recommendations of the triennial policy review;

(b) Encourage the steady flow of information to Member States on these activities;

(c) Encourage the steady flow of information among all partners of the United Nations development system on implementation of the triennial policy review and take note of the new mechanisms agreed upon within the UNDG for this purpose;

(d) Reaffirm the importance of undertaking evaluations of the impact of programmes and of development frameworks and other mechanisms.

B. Funding and resources

10. The year 1999 presented a new and unique set of challenges for UNFPA in the area of resource mobilization. Despite numerous fundraising efforts during the year, contributions to UNFPA general resources decreased to $250 million, 10 per cent less than in 1998 and approximately $40 million less than in 1997. Two of the most important factors for this have been the continuing unfavourable exchange rate of many currencies vis-à-vis the United States dollar, and the absence of a contribution from of one of UNFPA's major donors.

11. The financial prospects for 2000 look a bit better, with the return of one major donor and indications of increased contributions from several others. It is hoped that this will offset the significant reduction in contribution that has been announced by a major donor. UNFPA also expects to add to its supplementary resources, which increased by some 6 per cent in 1999 to around $34 million, although administering such resources is extremely labour-intensive and time-consuming. Moreover, with official development assistance (ODA) shrinking from $60.8 billion in 1992 to $51.8 billion in 1998 and with the resulting intense competition for funding, UNFPA is doubling its efforts to create more meaningful alliances with bilateral agencies, the development banks, private foundations, the European Union and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), among others. The Fund is also trying to find ways of broadening its donor base while at the same time exploring all avenues for meeting programme country needs.

12. UNFPA will be submitting it first Multi-Year Funding Framework (MYFF) to the UNDP/UNFPA Executive Board at its second regular session in 2000. The MYFF, which was developed in close consultation with the Board, is a coherent framework that builds on clearly defined organizational results and a set of indicators to track progress towards achieving those results. The development of the MYFF has provided UNFPA with an opportunity to accelerate the shift towards a

results-based approach that was already in motion. A clear definition of organizational priorities, greater emphasis on organizational effectiveness, and an improved tracking of and reporting on the Fund's performance will contribute to a more accurate determination of resource requirements and utilization and, it is hoped, encourage a more predictable and stable funding system.

13. As UNFPA moves forward, it will continue to focus its fundraising efforts on restoring stability to its general resources and securing a modest increase in income in 2000. The planned approach is to identify those donors with the potential to provide and/or increase their contributions to UNFPA. It is hoped that the momentum of the ICPD+5 will help to generate additional resources for the Fund.

Problems and lessons learned

14. The reduction in core resources in 1999 adversely affected UNFPA's programmes, constraining the Fund's ability to maximize programme results. UNFPA programmes had to be drastically reduced by some $72 million, and this has cut into the results that could have been produced in programmes that had been previously approved by the Executive Board. The reduction in resources could not have come at a worse time: 81 new UNFPA country programmes have been approved by the Board since the ICPD and, as was shown by the ICPD+5 process, momentum has been building in every region of the world to step up the implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action. Moreover, because of the strong momentum in the Fund's programme delivery, provisional estimates indicate that UNFPA programme expenditures were very high in 1999. This reflected the fact that most programmes were in mid-cycle and had reached their peak implementation phase. As a result, UNFPA may have to draw down from its operational reserve to cover the overexpenditure, which would be replenished from 2000 resources.

Recommendations

15. The Council may wish to:

(a) Note the progress achieved in the development of the MYFF within the UNFPA and the opportunity this has provided UNFPA to accelerate the shift towards a results-based approach;

(b) Emphasize the role of Governments in making funds available for the country programmes they approve;

(c) Reiterate the special roles of the members of ECOSOC and the Executive Boards in this regard;

(d) Make appropriate recommendations on the future of the United Nations pledging conference;

(e) Reiterate the call contained in paragraph 95 of the Key actions for the further implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action for donor countries to take the necessary steps to reverse the current decline in overall ODA and to strive to fulfil the agreed target of 0.7 per cent of gross national product for ODA as soon as possible;

(f) Encourage all donors to re-examine their ODA priorities with a view to increasing the relatively small proportion of their ODA that is currently allocated for population activities and for UNFPA.

C. Resident Coordinator system

16. UNFPA is represented on four bodies that have oversight of the Resident Coordinator system. These are the UNDG Subgroup on Resident Coordinator Issues, the Inter-Agency Panel for the Selection of Resident Coordinators, the Inter-Agency Steering Committee on Resident Coordinator Competency Assessment and the UNDG Subgroup on Training. Each of these groups continued its activities throughout 1999. The focus of all efforts was the continued fine-tuning of the Resident Coordinator selection process, particularly since that process was opened up to candidates from all agencies and funds following the introduction of competency assessment for all Resident Coordinator aspirants (in December 1998). Experience has shown that in 1999 the new system was functioning well, and was a vast improvement on what had preceded it.

17. UNFPA shares the concerns of all its partners in the Resident Coordinator system regarding such issues as security of the United Nations staff, among others, and it is participating actively in efforts in the UNDG in identifying ways to protect staff. The Fund has also responded enthusiastically to other staff issues such as inter-agency staff mobility aimed at deepening the process of collaboration at headquarters.

Problems and lessons learned

18. UNFPA has been a full and active member of the Resident Coordinator system under the leadership of the Resident Coordinator, participating in the various field committees, theme groups and working groups at the country level. This has been particularly challenging to UNFPA country offices, which, at one-fourth to one-tenth the size of some of its UNDG counterparts, find it difficult at times to participate in the increasing number of group activities of the Resident Coordinator system.

19. The process of identifying candidates for the pool of Resident Coordinators through the competency assessment exercise has been a useful tool, but it needs further fine-tuning. While UNFPA agrees that the costs of such assessment may be on the high side, the Fund has cooperated fully in the exercise on the assumption that the process could help strengthen the capabilities of staff. Nevertheless, UNFPA believes it advisable to explore whether the capacity to perform such competency assessments can be built up within the United Nations system as opposed to having it done by the private sector as is now the case. The Fund also acknowledges the need to address such complex issues as the annual performance assessment of sitting Resident Coordinators in their

capacity as coordinators as well as the competency assessment of sitting and former Resident Coordinators.

20. Efforts are being made, and should be intensified, to widen the pool of expertise of Resident Coordinators and to increase the participatory and open nature of the selection process. The issue of increasing the number of women candidates is a particular challenge in this regard, as women still make up less than 30 per cent of the total number of Resident Coordinators.

Recommendations

21. The Council may wish to :

(a) Identify ways to streamline coordination mechanisms and to ensure that processes result in better and more effective programme delivery;

(b) Reaffirm the need to broaden the pool of Resident Coordinators and to bring about a better gender balance in the Resident Coordinator system.

D. Implementation of the CCA and UNDAF

22. UNFPA has made a concerted effort to integrate the CCA and UNDAF Guidelines issued by the UNDG into its own programming processes. UNFPA has sent instructions to the field to use the CCA and UNDAF, where they are adequate, in place of its own programming tools. The Fund, with the assistance of the UNDG, organized an orientation workshop for its headquarters staff and plans to train its staff further on the new programming instruments. Using the experience gained to date, UNFPA will be reviewing the draft CCA and UNDAF documents with a view to learning lessons and ensuring that the documents receive the appropriate substantive technical inputs in all areas, including population and reproductive health. UNFPA will continue to work with its United Nations partners in streamlining and simplifying programming tools and processes not only to bring about greater complementarity and impact in their work but also to limit the burden on country offices and other partners in the field.

23. UNFPA attaches great importance to the issue of indicators and the collaborative efforts required to develop system-wide common indicators for effective programming. At the meeting organized by UNFPA of the BSSA Task Force in September 1999, UNFPA emphasized the importance of the CCA and UNDAF in this endeavour and stressed the need for developing common data sets, agreeing on appropriate indicators to monitor progress in reaching United Nations conference goals, adopting a broader focus on "qualitative indicators" that would give a full picture of the enabling environment affecting the primary quantitative indicators, and building country capacity in data collection, analysis and use.

Problems and lessons learned

24. UNFPA has played an active role in the UNDG Learning Network on the CCA/UNDAF from which lessons have been extracted. Moreover, with the introduction of the new programming tools, the spirit of collaboration has clearly resulted in strengthened team work and partnership, especially at the country levels, and progress has been made in unifying United Nations system partners under the vision of the reform initiative. Opportunities have been created to work together to promote programme coordination and joint programming and evaluation.

25. The overall quality of CCA and UNDAF documents has improved significantly since the pilot phase. However, efforts should be stepped up to incorporate lessons learned into the documents. This will ensure that the documents are more substantive and analytical, with more clearly identified priorities for the United Nations system. It will also make them more strategic and more responsive to the global United Nations conferences. Improving the quality of common databases and indicators is a challenge, especially in identifying indicators and establishing and managing a common database. The problems in this area are complex. In some cases, data are simply not available; in others, the data exist but are not reliable. In many situations, one has to choose the most appropriate indicator from among a large number of possible indicators. Work in the use of indicators in the social sector is especially constrained, and needs special efforts in cooperation with the Governments. All this complicates the process and potentially places undue burden on country offices and on Governments.

26. Resources must be made available with more predictability for such a complex exercise involving a detailed situational analysis, especially since a large number of indicators are needed for use as a general guide. The lack of resources to develop indicators and data systems therefore needs to be urgently addressed.

Recommendations

27. The Council may wish to:

(a) Take note of the importance of data collection and indicators in the implementation of the CCA/UNDAF processes and recommend that resources be made available on a more predictable basis to undertake the complex work in this area;

(b) Reaffirm the lead role of Governments in the process;

(c) Urge the need for predictable general resources for sustaining the impact of the CCA and UNDAF;

d) Urge that steps be taken to ensure maximum compatibility between the UNDAF and all other frameworks for development assistance.

E. Harmonization of programmes and procedures

28. Harmonization of programme cycles and simplification of procedures requires effective inter-agency coordination and collaboration at both the headquarters and country levels. UNFPA has been working closely with the UNDG in this area and has sought to consolidate the harmonization process and ensure that appropriate priority is given to this at the country level. Several activities have been undertaken as follows:

(a) Promoting and monitoring the finalization of harmonization action plans with clear time-frames endorsed by all members of the country team;

(b) Conducting regular reviews and taking joint decisions on country-specific cases and issues to facilitate further efforts at harmonization;

(c) Coordinating with country offices to ensure accurate understanding of the new procedures;

(d) Participating in the monitoring system within the UNDG Subgroup to ensure consistency and adherence to the endorsed harmonization time-frames.

Problems and lessons learned

29. Considerable progress has been made in the area of harmonization, but more still needs to be done. Steps have to be taken to ensure that harmonization can be sustained. Programme procedures have to be further simplified and harmonized, and efforts have to be made to ensure that programme cycles coincide with national development plans and sectoral plans. Firm guidelines have to be developed based on the guidance note on joint programming that was issued in 1999. Priority must be given to identifying key areas in the formulation and implementation of joint programmes, including, inter alia, the simplification and harmonization of financial procedures and reporting requirements relating to programme and project management. A desk review of experience to date emphasizing country office experience and identifying best approaches and lessons learned would be useful in such an endeavour.

Recommendations

30. The Council may wish to:

(a) Take note of the progress achieved in harmonization by UNDG members, and encourage UNDG members to take the necessary steps to further such harmonization and ensure that it can be sustained;

(b) Urge further monitoring of the harmonization at the country level.

F. Gender mainstreaming

31. UNFPA has cooperated fully in implementing the system-wide Medium-Term Plan for the Advancement of Women 1996-2000. UNFPA also continues to focus on the ICPD mandate of advancing gender equality and equity, the empowerment of women, the elimination of all kinds of violence against women, and ensuring women's ability to control their own fertility as cornerstones of population and development. Specific activities have included the following:

(a) Issuing guidelines on *UNFPA Support for Mainstreaming Gender Issues in Population and Development Programmes* and revising the guidelines for the Fund's three core programming areas to ensure that the gender perspective has been appropriately mainstreamed in each;

(b) Allocating resources for gender concerns through UNFPA's three core programme areas, and taking steps through the budget coding system to better reflect the Fund's commitment to gender issues;

(c) Strengthening efforts at the country level to build national capacities on gender issues through its Country Technical Services Teams (CSTs); and developing a comprehensive training manual on gender, population and development to facilitate this;

(d) Undertaking special efforts to collect and disseminate sex-disaggregated data as well as conducting studies on such issues as eradication of female genital mutilation (FGM); violence against women and girls; the socialization of boys and strategies for greater involvement of men in reproductive and sexual health matters; and the impact of HIV/AIDS on women, among other things.

32. At the Inter-agency level, UNFPA:

(a) Actively participates in the UNDG Subgroup on Indicators, one of whose main aims is to ensure that indicators and budgets are gender-sensitive;

(b) Served as the Task Manager in the Inter-Agency Committee on Women and Gender Equality (IACWGE) for the review of the gender focal point-function in the United Nations system. The results of this study will serve as an input to the Beijing+5 process;

(c) Participates actively in various inter-agency working groups, such as the IACWGE; the UNDG Subgroup on Gender; the UNDG Subgroup on the Right to Development; the UNDG Subgroup on Indicators, and inter-agency regional campaigns on violence against women (e.g., in Latin America and the Caribbean and in Africa);

(d) Participates in the IACWGE Subgroup on Best Practices and has finalized a publication on best practices in gender mainstreaming within the framework of population and development.

Problems and lessons learned

33. UNFPA's experience confirms that the benefits of individual control over one's reproductive and economic life reinforce each other. It is important therefore to provide support to improve women's livelihoods, while also ensuring that they have access to reproductive health services and information. It is also essential to intensify efforts to involve men in activities to eliminate inequalities between men and women and to promote women's empowerment in all spheres. A related challenge is to bring about a better understanding of key concepts in this area such as gender and empowerment.

34. Women and girls, particularly in armed conflicts, are especially vulnerable to sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), including HIV/AIDS, as well as to various forms of violence against them. They are also often far more vulnerable than men are to the effects of environmental degradation and pollution, particularly as regards their reproductive health. Moreover, in many countries, adolescents, especially female adolescents, are denied access to and information about reproductive and sexual health services. Recent economic and political developments in some countries, and the consequent decrease in investments in the social sector, have disproportionately affected the well-being of women and girls.

35. All this has been compounded by the lack of resources, particularly international resources, to implement the actions agreed to in the ICPD Programme of Action, as well as by the persistence of social, cultural and political factors that perpetuate discrimination against women and impede their empowerment.

G. Gender balance within UNFPA

36. UNFPA has adopted guidelines that clearly identify goals, tasks and accountability for gender mainstreaming at all levels. Translating the instructions of the Secretary-General on accountability of heads of agencies and programme managers on the issue of gender balance, UNFPA has placed emphasis on the recruitment of women for professional positions. As a result, women now occupy 50 per cent of all professional posts in UNFPA. This includes having four women out of seven Directors at the D-2 level (57 per cent), one of two Deputy Directors at the Assistant Secretary-General level and the Executive Director herself. UNFPA continues to be a strong advocate for issues pertaining to gender equality, specifically within the United Nations system, and will continue to emphasize the recruitment of women for professional positions.

Problems and lessons learned

37. Given the nature of its mandate and the focus of its programmes, UNFPA is fully aware of the importance of ensuring gender balance among UNFPA Representatives in the field. The Fund

therefore will continue to make every effort to recruit qualified women to serve as its country representatives.

Recommendations

38. The Council may wish to :

(a) Take note of UNFPA's achievements in the area of gender mainstreaming;

(b) Call for further efforts to accelerate progress in this area, drawing on experiences gained and on lessons learned during the ICPD+5 review process.

H. Capacity-building

39. The development of national capacity was identified as one of the critical factors in the Key actions for further implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action. In addition to its country programmes, UNFPA has two major programmes whose primary aim is to help countries build their capacity to implement the Programme of Action: the Technical Advisory Programme (2000-2003), which is in its third cycle; and the UNFPA intercountry programme (2000-2003), which is now in its fourth cycle. Both seek to improve the linkages between and among all levels of programme delivery – country, regional and intercountry. The process of development of UNFPA's Technical Advisory Programme has resulted in detailed discussions with programme countries on specific needs for technical assistance in capacity development. The focus in programming is on such key areas as adolescents, gender, knowledge management and distance learning, advocacy, and the expansion of partnerships on the basis of the comparative advantage of United Nations organizations and other entities.

40. In 1999, UNFPA endorsed guidelines on assessing its capacity to implement population programmes. UNFPA's participation in inter-agency groups and networks on monitoring capacity-building has been with a view to strengthen the impact of its assistance at the field level. In the context of a CCPOQ seminar on capacity-building, UNFPA provided proposals for identifying and strengthening common concepts and strategies in this area. UNFPA's initiative on the Subgroup on Programme Operations resulted in a UNDG report in March 1999 on legal frameworks and relevant legislation/policies, and on management techniques to assist the decentralization of the operations of national entities where appropriate. These efforts have emphasized the importance of accountability, results-based management, and the strategic planning involved in CCA and UNDAF exercises. The principle of gender mainstreaming has been consistently taken into account.

41. The aim of these efforts has been to strengthen the use of the CCA and UNDAF to assess national capacities, foster common perceptions of capacity-building issues and develop indicators to monitor capacity building. These issues have been examined concurrently with the study of greater

use of participatory and joint monitoring and evaluation exercises, continuation of efforts for joint training schemes and strategies, and the need for simplification and flexibility of procedures.

Problems and lessons learned

42. Recent studies undertaken by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA) in the context of the triennial policy review show that traditional means of capacity-building need a substantive overhaul. Partnerships have to be strengthened considerably to identify and develop further instruments for capacity-building in an environment of new emerging frameworks for development. Moreover, it is important to involve civil society in such activities at the country level, since this would ensure that capacity-building at various national levels would become truly participatory. Thus, the process of involving all partners in the preparation of country programmes is as important as the actual preparation of the country programme itself.

43. But capacity-building does not happen by itself. It has to be specifically and strategically planned for, and be based on a careful analysis of what works best in a given situation. The actions to be taken should be determined through comprehensive logical framework analyses and results-based approaches. The system-wide institutionalization of such an approach would have the added value of maximizing the limited financial and human resources available in field offices.

Recommendations

44. The Council may wish to:

(a) Take note of inter-agency efforts to share experiences on capacity-building and encourage all United Nations agencies to participate in such forums to ensure a wider exchange of views and experiences;

(b) Encourage Governments to take note of the importance of the civil society in capacity-building;

(c) Encourage the use of monitoring and evaluation as integral parts of capacity-building, especially where it relates to efforts to formulate strategies in this area.

I. Common premises and services

45. During 1998, the Subgroup on Common Premises and Services undertook 12 separate missions covering 17 countries in support of the United Nations House Initiative. In 1999, resource constraints limited these undertakings to 9 missions covering 13 separate countries. The issue of how to fund such missions was resolved for UNDG partner agencies in their respective Executive Boards wherein each agency submitted requests for dedicated funding for this initiative. The UNDP/UNFPA Executive Board agreed to the UNFPA proposal to utilize the field accommodation reserve for this

purpose. As a result, the Subgroup is at present actively pursuing projects in 22 separate countries. During 1998, 26 United Nations Houses were established, with a further 6 added in 1999. Ten additional countries have been preliminarily identified as having high potential for designation in 2000 as United Nations Houses.

46. On the issue of common services, a dedicated UNDG common-services database has been established following the analysis of data received in response to a comprehensive survey done at the country level by United Nations Resident Coordinators. In order to capitalize on this, the UNDG has scheduled an inter-agency workshop during March 2000 to develop United Nations system guidelines for the implementation and management of common services at the country level. UNFPA continues to invest the requisite staff time and extra costs to provide the necessary funding in order to participate actively in all such common premises and services initiatives.

Problems and lessons learned

47. Some important principles have been identified as the basis for success at individual country levels. These include the utilization of sound business practices including the preparation of cost-benefit analyses of real-estate options; the initiation of advance work and due-diligence studies; the participation of all agencies at the country level on the issue of harmonized services; the designation of focal points by each agency and the active coordination of efforts by the Resident Coordinator; and the involvement of appropriate technical experts (real-estate professionals, architects and engineers) together with designated project management. This last point is particularly pertinent in view of the fact that expertise in areas relating to this issue is often not available within the United Nations system and thus needs to be sought externally.

Recommendations

48. The Council may wish to:

(a) Take note of the progress achieved in this area;

(b) Underscore the importance of transparency, and shared management and accountability in efforts under way;

(c) Urge the United Nations system to use a pragmatic, cost-benefit-oriented approach in upcoming initiatives.

J. Cooperation with the World Bank

49. In 1999, the UNDG set up a Learning Group for inter-agency collaboration on issues pertaining to the Comprehensive Development Framework (CDF) and the Resident Coordinator system, and for generating innovative ideas for dealing with the debt situation in the Heavily Indebted

Poor Countries of the world (the HIPC Initiative). UNFPA collaborated closely on these issues both in the UNDG at headquarters and in country offices. The Learning Group was convened to follow-up on the meeting between the Deputy-Secretary-General and the senior management of the World Bank to enable the United Nations system to collectively follow the CDF pilot, both as a learning experience and as a means of ensuring feedback to their organizations. The focus was on country-level experiences with the CDF process in the pilot countries.

50. During discussions, UNFPA stressed the importance of coordination between the UNDAF and the CDF processes, especially on the fundamental need for ownership of both of the processes by the Governments concerned. UNFPA also emphasized the importance of the sectoral approach and the need for joint analytical work and a common analysis, so as to avoid duplication of efforts in this area.

51. During the past year, UNFPA and the World Bank continued to increase their cooperation, holding more frequent consultations between UNFPA's Geographic Divisions and the corresponding entities in the Bank both at headquarters and in the field. Moreover, the World Bank has made increasing use of UNFPA's procurement services, and it is expected that the volume of such procurement requests will continue to increase in 2000.

52. Collaboration has also increased between UNFPA and the World Bank in various ongoing initiatives such as the Safe Motherhood Initiative, Partners in Population and Development, Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), the UNFPA Global Initiative on Contraceptive Requirements and Logistics Management Needs in Developing Countries, and sector-wide approaches (SWAps). In the area of training, UNFPA is a co-sponsor of the World Bank Institute's course on Population, Reproductive Health and Health Sector Reform. UNFPA staff participate in World Bank activities such as the Human Development Week. The World Bank is an advocate for the implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action, and it took part in the General Assembly Special Session on ICPD+5 and in the round tables and technical symposiums that were part of the five-year review process. The World Bank also participates in the BSSA Task Force meetings, chaired by the Executive Director of UNFPA.

Problems and lessons learned

53. The emergence of the CDF at about the same time as the UNDAF requires that the World Bank and the United Nations system continue to work together to ensure maximum compatibility between the two instruments and, correspondingly, greater coordination at the country level, both among the various partners of the United Nations system as well as with Governments. It is also important to involve civil society and the private sector in the development frameworks to the extent possible and to continue to build confidence and trust among all key partners in the development process. Experience shows that the key to effective partnerships is, of course, commitment to the development priorities of the countries themselves. Efforts should therefore be intensified to secure agreement on objectives and expected outcomes in line with country strategies and priorities.

54. On the issue of indicators, the participation of programme countries in developing country-specific indicators must be enhanced and ensured. Moreover, greater emphasis has to be given to indicators related to the goals agreed to at the major international conferences. Given the World Bank's efforts in the area on indicators, there is a need for greater collaboration with the World Bank for the complex task of developing indicators for post-conflict situations.

Recommendations:

55. The Council may wish to:

(a) Take note of the efforts of the UNDG in increasing the levels of collaboration between the World Bank and the United Nations system, in particular through such initiatives as the Learning Group;

(b) Urge that further action be taken on the principles identified during these efforts, such as ensuring greater complementarity among donors and their programmes, as well as greater harmonization and coherence among them;

(c) Urge sustained collaborative efforts between the United Nations system and the World Bank in developing indicators for post-conflict situations and in ensuring cross-sectoral linkages among priorities in country strategies;

(d) Encourage optimization and cohesion in the reporting requirements from the various UNDG partners on the issue of collaboration with the World Bank so as to avoid increased workloads at the country level.

K. Monitoring and evaluation

56. In 1999, UNFPA undertook several internal analyses of its monitoring and evaluation system and practices and initiated steps to address weaknesses identified therein. For example, the Fund carried out a desk review to assess the application of the logical framework (logframe) approach to country programming as mandated by UNFPA's new programme guidelines issued in late 1997. This exercise reviewed actual logframe matrices prepared in connection with selected approved country programmes and examined the process used in their preparation including the use of logframes in monitoring and evaluation. Within the context of preparing the Fund's first Multi-year Funding Framework (MYFF), UNFPA conducted feasibility studies in five countries (Burkina Faso, Nicaragua, Sri Lanka, Sudan, and United Republic of Tanzania) in order to assess the strengths, constraints and capacity-building needs of country offices in implementing the logframe approach within the context of a results-based approach. These studies, together with the findings of other analytical exercises

such as thematic evaluations, policy application reviews and audits, were very instructive in highlighting strengths and shortcomings in project design, monitoring and evaluation.

57. Two important internal learning events took place during the year: (a) a workshop to strengthen staff understanding about the need for, and use of, indicators in programming; and (b) a workshop on the concept of results-based management, and the key elements of the MYFF and its implications for the organizational systems and practices of UNFPA. Moreover, the Fund established a web site to enable wider access to the findings of thematic evaluations. As a result, abstracts by topic as well as the full reports on thematic evaluations conducted since 1992 are now retrievable, as will be other analyses of evaluation findings on UNFPA-supported programmes.

58. UNFPA is now an active partner in the UNDP EVALNET, a network of evaluation resource persons, and led a UNDP evaluation in Guyana on a project in capacity-building in the health sector. The Fund established its own Evaluation Network, which provides the names of the UNFPA focal points for evaluation from each of the Fund's Country Technical Services Teams and its Office of Oversight and Evaluation. The aims of the Network are to promote learning from UNFPA's programme experience; to facilitate the ability of the Fund to demonstrate results for which it is accountable; and to facilitate communication and knowledge sharing on evaluation issues. The focal points met during the year to draw up a work plan for 2000-2001.

Problems and lessons learned

59. The desk review of the logframe found that the initial application of the approach was somewhat weak due to both conceptual and technical problems. The original strategy of "cascade" training did not seem to produce the intended results and may even have led to a lack of uniform understanding of the basics of the logframe techniques. Moreover, the lack of comprehensive data systems in many programme countries has made the selection of performance indicators more complex, and has heightened awareness of the need for resources to collect comprehensive data. More attention must be given to providing field offices with succinct, user-friendly information that synthesizes programme experiences.

60. Inter-agency collaboration in evaluation can be productive and useful, but the benefits to the collaborating organizations should be weighed in the context of the logistical and other difficulties inherent in carrying out such evaluations.

Recommendations

61. The Council may wish to:

(a) Take note of UNFPA's efforts to strengthen monitoring and evaluation techniques both within the organization as well as in collaborative efforts with all development partners;

(b) Urge that the United Nations system accelerate its efforts to strengthen monitoring and evaluation capacities at the country level;

(c) Urge all United Nations organizations to take the necessary steps to ensure the smooth interface among their evaluation databases;

(d) Encourage United Nations organizations to provide predictable and timely resources for staff training on matters related to new monitoring and evaluation techniques.

III. FOLLOW-UP TO INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCES

62. UNFPA attaches great importance to the follow-up activities to the global conferences of the 1990s, in particular with respect to the linkages among population, poverty and environmental degradation. UNFPA has contributed to the close collaboration between the United Nations system and Governments and other partners in efforts to monitor progress in these areas based on jointly derived indicators. In 1999, UNFPA's activities were at two distinct levels: (a) the ICPD+5 review; and (b) system-wide collaboration in the follow-up to conferences, particularly those undergoing five-year reviews.

A. UNFPA and ICPD+5

63. As was stressed by the Secretary-General at the General Assembly Special Session in June/July 1999, the ICPD+5 process sought to emphasize the linkages between population and development, as well as between sexual and reproductive health and human rights. The shortfall in the financial resources that had been agreed to in Cairo in 1994 and the effect of such shortfalls on human lives were illustrated during the review. The review and appraisal of the implementation of the Programme of Action concentrated primarily on policy changes and operational experiences at the country level in order to identify facilitating factors and constraints encountered during the initial five-year period since the conference. Those concrete experiences provided a basis for delineating further actions needed to accelerate and fine-tune the implementation of the Programme of Action in key areas, including the three core programme areas of the Fund.

64. As part of the ICPD+5 process, UNFPA conducted a field-level inquiry that focused on the following key areas: policies and programmes in population and development; gender equality, equity and women's empowerment; reproductive rights and reproductive health care; and government partnerships and collaboration with civil society. Some 114 developing countries and countries with economies in transition responded, as did 18 developed countries. The responses of the inquiry, which focused on lessons learned and constraints encountered, were coded and entered into a database for analysis, and the results were compiled and published. The resulting database allows for comparison of changes in policies and programmes since ICPD and can be used as a barometer to measure progress made in implementing the Programme of Action.

65. UNFPA has sought to give strategic focus to the follow-up to all international conferences, and to this end, organized a BSSA Task Force meeting immediately after the ICPD+5 review to work out the follow-up arrangements with other United Nations partners. The need for coordination under the lead agency system was emphasized at the meeting.

Problems and lessons learned

66. The ICPD+5 review process showed that actions taken since the ICPD had produced positive results, in particular in such areas as improving the quality of and access to reproductive health services; in formulating programmes and policies to meet the reproductive health needs of young people; and in protecting the rights of women and promoting their empowerment, among others. But it also showed that for some countries and regions, progress has been limited, and in some cases setbacks have occurred. Women and girls continue to face harmful discrimination; the HIV/AIDS pandemic is more severe than anticipated in 1994; far too many women are dying or becoming ill as a result of pregnancy and childbirth; and millions of couples and individuals still lack access to reproductive health information and services.

67. There has been some success in integrating population concerns into development strategies in come countries, but much more needs to be done, in particular by way of institutional, policy and legislative changes in the areas of population and development and reproductive health and rights. The need for an enhanced role for civil society has also been recognized. But the lack of coordination mechanisms and funding constraints often preclude more extensive collaboration between government and civil society groups. Moreover, there are often no legal frameworks, regulations or guidelines to facilitate partnerships with NGOs, and the lack of human and financial resources and of technical capacity in both governmental and non-governmental organizations impede effective partnerships. Much of this also pertains to the private sector, which remains under-involved in population and development activities in many programme countries.

68. Sociocultural factors continue to hinder the full achievement of gender equality and equity, especially in the areas of poverty among female-headed households, and these continue to be disparities in earning capabilities, high levels of maternal mortality and morbidity, violence against women and girls, trafficking and forced prostitution, and under-representation in positions of power and decision-making.

B. System-wide collaboration and other United Nations conference reviews

69. UNFPA has been collaborating very closely with the Division for the Advancement of Women and all other development partners in the preparations for the five-year review of the Fourth World Conference on Women. Many collaborative programmes are in place with UNICEF and UNESCO for the education of the girl child.

70. The ICPD Programme of Action stressed the need for integrating population and environment issues in planning and decision-making and for modifying unsustainable consumption and production patterns in order to foster sustainable resource use and prevent environmental degradation. It also called for implementation of policies to address the ecological implications of population dynamics. UNFPA has collaborated closely with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and other conservation agencies in various activities, including conducting workshops on these linkages.

71. UNFPA has made sustained efforts to identify linkages between population, poverty and environmental factors for integrated programming purposes in keeping with the ICPD. As with the five-year review of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), UNFPA is cooperating closely in all inter-agency efforts for the five-year review of the World Summit for Social Development. The ICPD recognized the linkages between human rights issues and the need for enhancing the full participation of all relevant groups, especially women, in population and environmental decision-making. Several programming interventions have been crafted by UNFPA at the field level in the knowledge that such investments provide choices and create opportunities for change for the most vulnerable groups. These have specifically been in the key sectors of health, education, and economic and resource management.

Problems and lessons learned

72. There appears to be scope for greater coordination and cohesion in providing development assistance among all the partners involved in the follow-up to the major conferences, including the willingness to utilize tools already available to the United Nations system from earlier efforts. However, it is essential that the agencies in the field and those that provide normative leadership to the United Nations system work closely together in operationalizing conference outcomes, with the guidance of the Governments, and in particular in developing integrated sectoral interventions as well as key system-wide indicators.

73. This is particularly important since most decision-making and funding – internationally, nationally and locally – remain divided by sectors such as agriculture, industry, trade, labour, education and health, among others. Cross-cutting issues such as poverty, the environment, women's empowerment, and concerns affecting youth and adolescents are therefore often inadequately addressed. This is exacerbated by econometric models and budget allocation frameworks that include only, or largely, economic and financial variables and thus fail to account for long-term social, environmental and population consequences.

74. All this is compounded by the fact that bridges are often not yet in place between and among specialized branches of governments, members of civil society and the international community. As a result, although community-based organizations and local NGOs in many countries have been able to develop innovative approaches for meeting people's needs while simultaneously promoting improved environmental management and reproductive health services, they have not succeeded in coordinating these efforts with national Governments and international organizations.

75. There is also the related problem of ensuring that all stakeholders, particularly women, participate in policy making and programme planning.

Recommendations

76. The Council may wish to:

(a) Note the progress in integrated follow-up to conferences both at inter-agency and individual agency levels;

(b) Emphasize the need for greater involvement of women in integrated programming including through gender-sensitive environmental and reproductive health initiatives;

(c) Reiterate the need for all Governments to participate actively in operationalizing the key recommendations of all United Nations conference outcomes;

(d) Emphasize the use of theme groups for cross-cutting effectiveness;

(e) Emphasize the importance of monitoring conference goals;

(f) Call upon all Member States to make available the resources necessary for the full implementation of the conference outcomes, and to participate fully in all the reviews of global conferences and their preparatory processes.

IV. HUMANITARIAN AND DISASTER RELIEF ASSISTANCE

77. UNFPA provides support for reproductive health in emergency and crisis situations on the basis that reproductive health needs are needs that transcend conflict and that such needs are health rights of all people regardless of their geographic location. UNFPA therefore seeks to ensure that all individuals, regardless of their status or condition, have access to reproductive health services.

78. Since 1994, the Fund has been very active, within the scope of its mandate and limited resources, in focusing international attention on issues of reproductive health and rights in emergency and crisis situations. Currently, UNFPA has 21 projects in operation in this area. The Fund also has a wealth of experience in data collection, analysis and use that can be made available in emergency situations. In many cases, UNFPA has been able to provide the necessary demographic data for the development of humanitarian needs assessments as well as for sectoral planning for rehabilitation. UNFPA is now active in needs assessments led by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) and in supporting relief-intervention monitoring systems through the establishment of basic indicators and implementation of sentinel surveillance systems. These database development activities, which are a standard part of UNFPA programmes, are increasingly in demand

in emergency and crisis situations. UNFPA also addresses violence against women and seeks to ensure that reproductive health is part of health-sector rehabilitation. UNFPA fully supports all activities initiated by the Secretary-General to protect all United Nations staff members and humanitarian assistance personnel in emergency and other areas of United Nations functioning.

Problems and lessons learned

79. Despite the achievements of UNFPA activities in emergency and crisis situations, the Fund's impact in this area is constrained by the limited success in mobilizing outside funds for projects included in consolidated appeals. There is also not enough attention being given to making development assistance applicable to humanitarian emergencies and crisis, or to addressing certain specific issues in emergency and crisis situations such as gender concerns and reproductive health, including family planning and sexual health, among others.

Recommendations

80. The Council may wish to:

(a) Reaffirm the need for special protection measures for all vulnerable people, especially women and girls, in conflict situations;

(b) Call for all possible measures to protect United Nations staff and respect the privileges and immunities granted under international law;

(c) Urge measures for timely responses to provide immediate support for reproductive health and data needs in emergency and crisis situations, and encourage the efforts made by UNFPA in this area.

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